

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4500

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1865

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR USCB

SUBJECT: SIHANOUK MEETING WITH FRG DC BERENDONCK

1. FRG DCM BERENDONCK, WHO SPENT 5 YEARS IN CAMBODIA AS AMBASSADOR, TOLD ME THAT TWO DAYS BEFORE SIHANOUK LEFT FOR PHNOM PENH, SIHANOUK INVITED HIM, HIS WIFE AND THEIR DAUGHTER TO HAVE LUNCH WITH HIM AND THE PRINCESS. THE LUNCH WAS HELD IN THE OLD GERMAN LEGATION, WHICH IS NOW ASSIGNED TO SIHANOUK AS HIS PEKING BASE. DURING THE MEAL, SIHANOUK DISCUSSED HIS UPCOMING TRAVELS AND PROBLEMS FACED BY HIS ENTOURAGE IN RETURNING TO CAMBODIA. HE ALSO TALKED ABOUT THE US WITH BITTERNESS AND ANGER.

2. BERENDONCK ALSO HAD HEARD FROM PUNG PENG CHENG, SIHANOUK'S (FORMER) CHEF DE CABINET, IN PARIS, WHO TOLD HIM HE WANTED TO "STAY IN TOUCH" WITH JOHN HOLDRIDGE AND ASKED FOR HOLDRIDGE'S ADDRESS.

3. A CAMBODIAN JUST BACK FROM PHNOM PENH TOLD BERENDONCK THAT THE ROYAL PALACE HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF ALL ITS ORNAMENTS AND SYMBOLS. THE ONLY ITEMS FOUND WERE SOME COMMEMORATIVE GOLD MEDALS. THE CAMBODIANS PUT THE BLAME
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DIRECTLY ON THE US FOR THIS LOOTING. BERENDONCK TOLD HIS

INFORMANT THAT GIVEN THE COMMUNIST'S OPPOSITION TO ROYALTY AND ITS SYMBOLISM IT WAS MORE LIKELY THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD STRIPPED THE PALACE. THE CAMBODIAN SEEMED CONFUSED AT THIS POINT.

4. COMMENT: BERENDONCK OBVIOUSLY HAS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SIHANOUK. SIHANOUK TOLD HIM HE WANTED TO STAY IN TOUCH. WE WILL FOLLOW UP AS APPROPRIATE WITH BERENDONCK.
BUSH

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